

Environmental Consultants

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The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments affect Wisconsin businesses of every size. Where can you go for help if your business faces air pollution rules and regulations? Some businesses will attempt to figure out the rules, regulations and forms on their own. Other businesses may turn to an environmental consultant.

An environmental consultant can help you understand state and federal air requirements. Consultants may also help you estimate your emissions, provide assistance in filling out air permit applications or assist you with permitting strategies. Few businesses question the need for improved air quality, but many businesses question how they are affected by air regulations and what they need to do to comply. It is the consultant's job to answer your questions and provide you with cost-efficient solutions.

Where to Find an Environmental Consultant

If you decide to seek the services of an environmental consultant, where do you find one?

- ✓ Network with other businesses like yours. Find out who has used a consultant, who the consultant was, did he/she do a good job and would the person use them again?
- ✓ Contact your trade association, Chamber of Commerce or the Better Business Bureau.
- ✓ Look in the Yellow Pages under consultants, attorneys (some lawyers specialize in environmental law and offer consulting services) or environmental services.
- ✓ Use the Federation of Environmental Technologists (FET) membership directory, which lists environmental consultants. FET works with Wisconsin's regulatory agencies. Membership includes consultants trained in air permitting and environmental regulations. You can contact

FET at (414) 251-8163.

- ✓ Using the Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program Clean Air Consultant Listing. Contact a program representative at (608) 264-6153 for a listing of firms that provide air pollution consulting services to small businesses.
- ✓ Review the University of Wisconsin's Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center's (SHWEC) list of Industrial and Environmental Consultants. Contact SHWEC at (608) 262-0385.
- ✓ Use the Wisconsin Association of Consulting Engineers (WACE) directory of environmental consulting firms and their specialties. Contact WACE at (608) 257-9223.

Contact several consultants and request a project proposal including qualifications, references, scope of services, and fees to complete the project. Remember, you are putting your business into the consultant's hand. Look for a reputable environmental consultant you feel comfortable with and can trust.



What to Look For in an Environmental Consultant

While the cost of a consultant is an important concern, the least expensive consultant may not always be the best value or the right one for your business. This is especially true given the increasing number of environmental regulations affecting small businesses.

Many consultants may not have direct experience or specific training in the area your business needs. A new thing to think about when choosing a consultant:

Consider Compatibility

- Has the consultant worked with your type of business before?
- Does the consultant have experience in your business county? (Some regulations and deadlines vary from county to county.)
- Does the consultant have experience dealing with your types of pollutants or your specific area of concern?
- Can the consultant communicate with you in a clear manner?

Consider Credibility

- What kind of reputation does the consultant have?
- Does the consultant have solid references?
- Does the consultant have experience with Wisconsin's regulatory agencies?
- How many years has the consultant been in business?
- Does the consultant belong to any professional associations?
- What type of training, certifications, licenses and/or registration does the consultant have? What is the consultant's background?
- Does the consultant have experience with EPA Region V's Air Compliance and Enforcement Division?

Consider Cost-Effectiveness

- Is this consultant in your price range?
- Do you understand what you're paying for?
- Can you get assistance from some other source?
- Has the consultant provided a detailed a

scope of services? Is the scope of work complete?

- If DNR needs more information after the permit application has been prepared, will it cost more money for the consultant to provide it?

Questions to ask an Environmental Consultant

Call around to several consultants and don't be afraid to ask questions. Talk to the person with whom you'll be working, not to a marketing or sales person. Some basic questions to ask could include:

- ✓ What kind of training, experience, education or certification does your firm have?
- ✓ Have you helped businesses similar to mine in the past? How many? How long ago?
- ✓ Have you helped other businesses in this area (i.e., permitting, emission control)?
- ✓ Have you taken any training courses on air permitting?
- ✓ How many permit applications have you prepared?
- ✓ Can I get a list of references from you?
- ✓ What are your contract terms and provisions? How are your fees negotiated?
- ✓ How long will it take to complete this work?
- ✓ Will you do a site visit of my business?
- ✓ How many visits to my business will you require?
- ✓ What type of guarantee will you give me, ensuring that your services will be accurate and adequate to bring me into compliance?
- ✓ Do you have professional liability insurance? If yes, does it cover pollution related claims? Who is the insurer?
- ✓ Does your firm have a certified lab to handle stack/effluent/soil testing samples?
- ✓ How much will this project cost me?
- ✓ How much of my time will you require? What responsibilities will be required of me?
- ✓ Who will be assigned to my project. What are his or her credentials?

Establishing a Contract with an Environmental Consultant

A contract between you and the consultant may be a formal detailed document or a simple letter

of agreement. Either way, get it in writing! Include who will do what, by when. Determine in advance how any follow-up requests for information will be handled. Be sure both parties sign the contract. Other things to keep in mind when preparing a contract:

- Spell out the exact nature of the work expected;
- Clearly state the method of determining fees for the services and any anticipated expenses, (i.e., hourly compensation, certain standard prices for a particular service, etc);

- Clearly state the method of payment (one lump sum, several payments over time);
- Ask questions if you do not understand any part of the contract;
- Will there be any charges for follow-up information?

In your contract, consider including insurance requirements for Commercial General Liability (CGL), Business Automotive Liability, Workers Compensation and Professional Liability insurance. Suggested language for the insurance requirements is available from the Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program.

Other Assistance Providers

There are other organizations and state agencies available to help you understand the complexities of the Clean Air Act and other environmental regulations.

Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program contact a Department of Commerce Clean Air Specialist at 608/267-9214 or 608/264-6153.

UW Extension Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center

Milwaukee County businesses call 414/227-3371. Business located in the rest of the state call 608/262-0385.

Wisconsin Association of Consulting Engineers at 608/257-WACE (9223).

Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Air Management at 608/266-7718.